

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION & LICENSING



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STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING
AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF	:	
DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST	:	
	:	FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
KRISTINE IHLE-SPRECHER,	:	LS# 0612201 SOC
RESPONDENT.	:	

Division of Enforcement Case # 06 SOC 037

The parties to this action for the purposes of Wis. Stat. § 227.53 are:

Kristine Ihle-Sprecher
N9343 State Road 78
Blanchardville, WI 53516

Division of Enforcement
Department of Regulation and Licensing
1400 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Social Worker Section
Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling
and Social Work Examining Board
Department of Regulation & Licensing
1400 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Notice of Hearing and Complaint was filed with the Social Worker Section on December 20, 2006. Prior to the hearing on the Complaint, the parties in this matter agreed to the terms and conditions of the attached Stipulation as the final disposition of this matter, subject to the approval of the Board. The Board has reviewed this Stipulation and considers it acceptable.

Accordingly, the Board in this matter adopts the attached Stipulation and makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Kristine Ihle-Sprecher, (DOB 06/21/1967) is duly certified as a Social Worker in the State of Wisconsin (certificate # 120-4296). This certificate was first granted on December 14, 1994.
2. Respondent's most recent address on file with the Social Worker Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board is N9343 State Road 78, Blanchardville, Wisconsin, 53516.

3. At all relevant times, Respondent worked as a social worker for Dane County Department of Human Services, Division of Children, Youth & Families.

4. Respondent was warned in January and February of 2006 about a need to be accountable for her time. Specifically, she was frequently unaccounted for during the workday, and did not keep her voicemail updated when out of the office.

5. On March 23, 2006, Respondent reported working eight hours but only three hours could be accounted for. Respondent planned to go to a residential care center and was due back at the office at approximately 1:30 p.m. She did not return to the office at all that day. When asked, she told her supervisor that she had attended a staffing at the residential care center, chatted with the child in placement, had lunch, then returned to the facility and spent more time with the child. Then she stated that she attempted, unsuccessfully, to contact clients in Stoughton and Madison. The staff at the residential care center state that Respondent was there for only one hour and fifteen minutes, and she did not return to visit the client. The client in Madison reported that Respondent knows exactly how to find her and had not attempted to see her in months.

6. In March, 2006, Respondent documented time and claimed mileage reimbursement for two trips to Oregon, Wisconsin to meet with a client and his teacher. The teacher reports that no such conduct occurred. At a meeting with her supervisor on April 14, 2006, Respondent admits that she lied about the contacts.

7. On several occasions in February and March of 2006, Respondent documented time and claimed mileage reimbursement for visiting a client in Oregon, Wisconsin. Her supervisor later spoke to professionals linked to that client, who stated that Respondent attended team meetings, which were held in Madison, but she made no extra trips to Oregon to visit the client.

8. On another occasion, Respondent documented time and claimed mileage reimbursement for trips to visit a client at a local middle school. She also claimed reimbursement for taking this child to lunch on two occasions. Respondent's supervisor confirmed with the teacher, the school secretary and the school social worker that she had never visited the client at school except to attend team meetings. The child stated that Respondent had never stopped by to see him outside of a team meeting and never took him to lunch.

9. Respondent's supervisor undertook a review of respondent's cases over a six month time period, and discovered twenty-nine instances in which Respondent was given money, gas cards, grocery cards, or other types of financial reimbursement, totaling \$1,095.76, for items that clients indicated that they never received. For example:

- (a) She submitted for reimbursement receipts for grocery cards that she said went to the parent of a child on her caseload (including one receipt for a \$125 grocery card for Copps grocery store). That parent indicated that many months ago she received one grocery card from Respondent for \$75 for Woodman's grocery store, but did not receive the Copps card or any others.
 - (b) Respondent submitted two receipts dated February 8, 2006. One was for reimbursement for lunch with a client who was in a residential care center in La Crosse. Staff from the residential care center state that Respondent was there that day for just over an hour, but did not take the child out of the facility. The second receipt was for clothing and other incentives that Respondent claims that she purchased with and for the client. The items that she claimed to have purchased for the client were not listed on the itemized receipt, and staff from the residential care center indicated that she did not take the client from the residential care center and did not send the items to her at any time.
 - (c) During several months in early 2006, respondent requested and was given a number of gas cards that she claimed were for client use. The gas station traced the cards and noted that cards issued for two different clients were used within one minute of each other at the same store. There were also a number of cards used at the same stores in Verona and Belleville, Wisconsin.
10. Respondent claimed at least 18 mileage reimbursement entries, totaling \$275.13, for trips that did not occur.

11. Respondent's supervisor also noted 24 instances of time entries for events that did not actually occur. These false entries caused Dane County to receive \$1,540 in State of Wisconsin Medical Assistance dollars for which it was not entitled.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Social Worker Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board has jurisdiction to act in this matter, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26, and is authorized to enter into the attached Stipulation and Order, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.44(5).

2. The conduct described in paragraphs 5-11 above constitutes a violation of Wisconsin Administrative Code §§ MPSW 20.02(6), (7), and (22), and subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 457.26(2)(f) and (g).

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED:

1. The stipulation of the parties is approved.

2. The Social Worker Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board accepts the surrender of the certificate of Kristine Ihle-Sprecher (certificate # 120-4296), to practice as a social worker in the State of Wisconsin.

3. In the event that Ms. Ihle-Sprecher applies for a Wisconsin credential as a social worker in the future, the Board shall enter an order denying such application without further notice or hearing.

4. This Order shall become effective upon the date of its signing.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin this 31st day of January, 2007.

Social Worker Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board

By: Mary Jo Walsh
A Member of the Section

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE SOCIAL WORKER SECTION
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING
AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF	:	
DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST	:	
	:	STIPULATION
KRISTINE IHLE-SPRECHER,	:	LS# 0612201 SOC
RESPONDENT.	:	

Division of Enforcement Case # 06 SOC 037

Kristine Ihle-Sprecher, personally on her own behalf; and Jeanette Lytle, attorney for the Department of Regulation and Licensing, Division of Enforcement, stipulate:

1. This Stipulation is entered into as a result of a pending investigation of Respondent's credential by the Division of Enforcement (case # 06 SOC 037). Respondent consents to the resolution of this investigation by stipulation.
2. Respondent understands that by signing this Stipulation she voluntarily and knowingly waives her rights, including: the right to a hearing on the allegations against her, at which time the state has the burden of proving those allegations by a preponderance of the evidence; the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against her; the right to call witnesses on her behalf and to compel their attendance by subpoena; the right to testify herself; the right to file objections to any proposed decision and to present briefs or oral arguments to the officials who are to render the final decision; the right to petition for rehearing; and all other applicable rights afforded to her under the United States Constitution, the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and any other provisions of state or federal law.
3. Respondent has been provided an opportunity to obtain the advice of legal counsel prior to signing this stipulation.
4. Respondent agrees to voluntarily surrender her certificate to practice as a social worker in the State of Wisconsin. Respondent agrees that she will not apply for a Wisconsin credential as a social worker at any time in the future. In the event that Respondent does in fact apply for a Wisconsin credential as a social worker, the Section may deny the application based upon this stipulation, without further notice or hearing, and Respondent hereby expressly waives all rights to a hearing on any such denial or limitation.
5. Respondent agrees to the adoption of the attached Final Decision and Order by the Social Worker Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board. The parties to the Stipulation consent to the entry of the attached Final Decision and Order without further notice, pleading, appearance or consent of the parties. Respondent waives all rights to any appeal of the Board's order, if adopted in the form as attached.
6. If the terms of this Stipulation are not acceptable to the Board, the parties shall not be bound by the contents of this Stipulation, and the matter shall be returned to the Division of Enforcement for further proceedings. In the event that this Stipulation is not accepted by the Board, the parties agree not to contend that the Board has been prejudiced or biased in any manner by consideration of this attempted resolution.
7. The parties to this Stipulation agree that the attorney or other agent for the Division of Enforcement and any member of the Social Worker Section of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social Work Examining Board ever assigned as an advisor in this investigation may appear before the Board in open or closed session, without the presence of the Respondent or her attorney, for purposes of speaking in support of this agreement and answering questions that any member of the Board may have in connection with the Board's deliberations on the Stipulation. Additionally, any such Board advisor may vote on whether the Board should accept this Stipulation and issue the attached

Final Decision and Order.

8. Respondent is informed that should the Board adopt this Stipulation, the Board’s final decision and order is a public record and will be published in accordance with standard Department procedure.
9. Respondent is further informed that should the Board adopt this Stipulation, the Board’s Final Decision and Order would constitute an agency finding within the meaning of Wis. Stats. §§ 48.685 and 50.065. Should Respondent wish to work in a Wisconsin DHFS-licensed facility, she will need to pass a Rehabilitation Review through DHFS prior to commencement of such employment.
10. The Division of Enforcement joins Respondent in recommending the Board adopt this Stipulation and issue the attached Final Decision and Order.

Kristine Ihle-Sprecher
N9343 State Road 78
Blanchardville, WI 53516

Date

Jeanette Lytle, Attorney
Division of Enforcement
Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708-8935

Date